

LEAD SHEET

LIFE IS NOT A GAME : WEEK 5

The Need

April 9, 2017

FAITH SKILL:

NAVIGATE THE BIBLE

If you want to know God better, read His Word!

GETTING STARTED

Sometimes we have to suffer things in life because we're a Christian. Don't get me wrong, not all suffering is because we believe in Jesus. But sometimes the two are directly linked.

General Discussion:

- Ask for input in ways Christians may suffer because of their faith.
- Ask if anyone in the group has suffered hardships because of their faith in God.

Following Jesus will cost us something. Today, we're going to explore this whole idea more deeply.

DIGGING IN

Some people look at following Jesus as just something else they do. But to follow in Christ's footsteps truly means suffering. It's not an easy ride. In fact, to serve God in this world means much sacrifice. Today, we're going to look at a story of a man who learned that lesson the hard way. His name in this passage is Saul. He's later re-named Paul. Please turn to Acts 9.

Read Acts 9:1-19

Discussion Questions:

1. What was Paul known for when he was named Saul?
2. Why was he on his way to Damascus?
3. What do you think of Paul's conversion? How intense must it have been for him personally?
4. What would the average Christian have thought upon learning that the dangerous Saul had converted to the faith?
5. Acts 9:16 talks about how Paul suffered for God's Name. What do you think is the connection between serving and suffering?

Paul gave his life to the ministry of the Gospel. And, as a result, he suffered greatly. In fact, he tells the Corinthians of that suffering in 2 Corinthians 12.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:22-28

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of Paul's sufferings do you find the most tragic?
2. How does Paul recount these sufferings? With regret? With boasting?
3. How do you think Paul looked back on his conversion after his suffering?
4. Do you think Paul viewed it all as "worth it"?

There are great needs all around us, people who've never heard about Jesus, people who have had opportunities to respond to the Gospel but resisted, poor people, hurting people, oppressed people, abused people, hungry people. To meet needs, we have to surrender to Jesus and be willing to serve Him. For Paul, that meant suffering. But doing anything else is wasting our time.

MAKING IT REAL

It's one thing to see this idea at work in the life of Paul. It's another thing to recognize that there are great needs all around us. It may mean that we have to sacrifice greatly in order to meet those needs. Serving God means less comfort for us, not more.

General Discussion:

1. Do you think doing anything other than living for God is a waste of time? Why or why not?
2. We all know Paul came to serve God. First, he had to give his life to God and surrender to him. Do you think you've done that?
3. After we surrender to God, there's a lot of work to do. What do you think you are particularly good at that could help people get to know Jesus?
4. To serve God, you're going to have to give things up: your own plans, dreams, etc. Are you willing to do that? Do you understand what that means? Discuss.
5. Which would be better, to suffer for God's Name, or to waste your life? Why do you think that?
6. What are some ways you can serve God immediately, from this day forward? *(Allow for answers. Some suggestions are coming to church more often, starting to read your Bible and do your PowerUp, obeying God, being baptized, or being a part of Project Shine or another mission trip.)*

CLOSING PRAYER

I want to encourage you to serve God as soon as you leave today. Think of everything you do as an opportunity to please God with your life. Who's in charge, you or Him? We're going to spend some quiet moments in prayer. Close in Prayer.